IMT Nuremberg Archives

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International Court of Justice

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5 June, 1946.

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OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

5 June, 1946.

COMMISSIONER:

Captain Joseph Tubridy.

(THE COMMISSION CONVENED AT 1620 HOURS.)

THE SS.

DIETER WISLICENY, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Q What is your name?

A Dieter Wisliceny

Q Will you repeat this oath after me:

I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated the oath.)

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: You may sit down.

DR. PELKMAN: (Defense Council for SS) I will ask the witness concerning the measures taken to keep secret the Endloesung, or final solution by Eichmann and how many people were connected with the incident and what kind of personnel was connected with it.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Do you have a statement? Dr Pelkman, of what you intend to prove

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DR. PELKMAN: I thought it was only necessary to give the statement through the transcript.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: We would like to have a written statement in the future.

BY DR. PELKMAN:

Q What is to be understood under Eichmann's final solution?

A I already explained this word or this idea in my hearing before the court on the 3rd of January. Behind this camouflauge, this code name, was the hidden order of Hitler for the biological destruction of the Jewish people in Europe.

Q Did this code name always have the same meaning?

A No. In 1940, when I joined the commission of Eichmann, under the Endloesung, the final solution was understood to be the total immigration of the European Jews.

Q When did you find that this idea of thought was changed?

A In August of 1942.

Q How did that come about?

A I already made a statement concerning this before the court on January 3rd, 1946 and I do not know if it is necessary for me to repeat it all over again here.

Q It is not necessary that you describe this entire thing again. Will you tell me the proclamation taken to keep this order, which you say was from Eichmann, secret?

A At that time - which is in August, 1942 - Eichmann showed me the written order and he told me that excepting for his representative, Guenther,

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I was the only one to see this order and he told me at the time that a breaking of the oath, which I had to take, as well as a handclasp, would mean serious consequences, even death, for me.

Q Did you keep this oath?

A I kept this oath very logg, however, I did talk to other people concerning this later on.

Q With whom did you talk.

A They were Jews, that is members or representatives of the American Joint Committee, with whom I had been in connection since 1942 in Pressburg.

Q Was not Gruppenfuehrer Mueller informed of this?

A I am certain that Mueller also knew of it, because Eichmann discussed all duties and accomplishments of his committee with Mueller.

Q You made a diagram with various names as a basis for your statements before the court in January of 1946. Did all of the persons named on the chart know of this special mission?

A I cannot say for certain whether all of them knew concerning this order, however, if you show me this diagram, I can tell you with whom I talked concerning this measure.

(DR. PELKMAN HANDS THE WITNESS THE DIAGRAM.)

I remember that in the fall of 1942, there was a meeting of the committee of Eichmann and I found out after this meeting that Eichmann had talked with some of his co-workers concerning this new order. I now can give the names of the people from this diagram whom I know knew of the new order. They are:

Hauptsturmfuehrer Brunner

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Sturmbannfuehrer Hans Guether

Hauptsturnfuehrer Otto Hunsche

Hauptsturnfuehrer Franz Novak

Untersturmfuehrer Hartenberger

Hauptsturmfuehrer Dr. Seidl

Hauptsturmfuehrer Dannecker

Obersturmbannfuehrer Krumey

Hauptsturnfuehrer Burger

These are the men that I know heard of this measure in the fall of 1942 or later on.

Q Was that due to the fact that Eichmann had a special trust in these persons that is a higher trust than a person has in his subordinates?

A Yes.

Q Would you tell me what measures were taken to keep this order of Eichmann's secret?

A First of all, no written statements were supposed to be made concerning this. He also told me, at the time of the meeting in the fall of 1942 and later on, of some of the measures taken to keep this absolutely secret. He also said that for that reason he had permitted Theresienstadt camp to continue in order that he could bring members of the International Commissions and the American Red Cross there to give them the impression that the housing of the Jews there was the same all over as they were in Theresienstadt. He also had figured a certain kind of numbering cards and letters with which he hoped to mislead the population. The Jews that were

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brought to the extermination camp at Auschwitz and other camps were forced, before their murder, to write post cards to several persons. These post cards were sent out at various intervals in order to give the impression that these persons were still alive. I also had foreign correspondents visit Auschwitz and Soshoviez. I personally took a German-Slovakian correspondent to this camp at Auschwitz and Soshoviez. It was impossible during this visit to see any kind of destruction or extermination status in these camps.

Q Did you know at that time that the Jews were being exterminated?

A No, that was a short time before Eichmann informed me of this order.

Q Do you know of the measures that Eichmann took concerning foreign countries or governments, such as the Slovakian Government, in order to keep the mission behind the extermination of the Jews a secret?

A In the conferences with the Slovakian Government, Eichmann asked for five hundred marks for every Jew that was deported to Poland as a settlement fee, so as to give the Polish Government the impression that these Jews were actually being settled in Poland.

Q Coming back to the camp at Auschwitz. How was the camp situated? Could the people in the surrounding country notice for what purpose this camp was being later on used?

LT. HARRIS: I object to this question as being asked without proper foundation. It must first be established as to the time about which the witness is being asked, if he was there at the time and further foundation should be furnished to establish if he if competent to testify.

DR. PELKMAN: The witness has already said that he visited the

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camp in August of 1942. May I have the question answered?

LT. HARRIS: I did not have in mind what he said happened in August of 1942.

DR. PELKMAN: May I ask him about that?

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Has this witness appeared before the Tribunal? Has he testified to this matter before the Tribunal?

DR. PELKMAN: As far as I know from the transcript "no." He stated previously before that he had visited the camp in August of 1942 together with a Slovakian newspaper man and that he did not know at that time it was an extermination camp and found this out a short time later from Eichmann.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: I think we can proceed. Mr. Pelkman, I suggest that we have the transcript of the witnesses statements before the Tribunal so that we can find out what there is in the evidence.

DR. PELKMAN: I have the German transcript here. I believe that I can state he did not talk about his visit to Auschwitz.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Alright, proceed.

BY DR. PELKMAN:

Q Witness, can you tell me when you visited Auschwitz, how the camp was situated and what was the connection between the population of the surrounding country to the camp and any such facts?

A I was with the Slovakian newspaper man in Austria in the summer of 1942. I believe it was the end of July or early in August. We drove by car from Slovakia to Auschwitz. Of course, I could not judge the entire size of the camp during this very short visit, I only noticed at the time

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that the camp was very isolated from the surrounding country and that there was about four to five miles especially of deadland between the surrounding towns and villages and the camp and the land was covered by posts and barbwire. I cannot say how much the population knew of the happenings in Auschwitz as my visit was only of a very short nature.

Q Who took care of the transporting of the Jewish prisoners to Auschwitz?

A Only members of the Order Police were used by Eichmann. They were used to guard and transport these prisoners. I know of only one case where members of the Waffen SS guarded such a transport and that was in Hungary. There, Germans of foreign birth, who had been made into a guard organization, were used to guard these people to Auschwitz.

Q You said that the only ones used to guard these transports were the Order police and you also say that the police of the individual countries from where these people came were used to guard these transports?

A Yes, that was true in some cases. For instance, transports that came from Slovakia to the Reichs border were guarded by the Slovakian police and the same is true of Hungary as they were guarded by the Hungarian police until they reached the German border and then the Order police took over.

Q Did the guards of these transports, whether they were foreigners, policemen or Germans, know of the fate of these transports?

A I talked to the members of these guards several times and they told me they were not allowed to enter the camp at Auschwitz. At the railroad station in Auschwitz, they were given food and also new orders and left immediately. I do not think that these men had any detailed information as to the fact of the Jews at Auschwitz.

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Q Maybe they could have received this information from the people that they transported. Did these people know anything of their fate?

A This question is very hard for me to answer, as I did not talk to any of the Jews that were being transported. I do not have enough information to answer this question.

Q What persons within the camp knew what was to happen to these Jews and what people in the camp actually did the killing or the liquidation?

A I can only say what Eichmann told me.

LT. HARRIS: I object on the grounds that the witness can only testify to hear-say at the best and we already have competent witnesses who can say and who did have knowledge of what happened to these men at Auschwitz. For instance, the commandant at Auschwitz, therefore, I don't think that this witness is competent.

DR. PELKMAN: I think he does have some information since he was told by Eichmann what measures Eichmann had taken to keep this entire matter secret. The information that Eichmann had given him is very important.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: I believe that first we ~~should~~ might take the time to ~~carefully~~ examine the transcript ~~and refresh our minds on the transcript~~ before we go ahead.

DR. PELKMAN: Very well.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: It is not quite clear what additional matters you want this witness to bring out, Dr. Pelkman.

DR. PELKMAN: I stated in the beginning, I wanted to find out

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through this witness the system used in keeping this action by Eichmann secret, also what persons knew about this action and this was not covered in the interrogation before the court on January 3rd.

(THE COMMISSION RECESSED AT 1700 HOURS.)

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The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of DIETER WISLICENY taken on 5 June 1946.

Alice Meehan
Reporter (pp 1- 9)

CERTIFIED

Joseph F Tubridy
Commissioner

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(The witness repeated the oath.)

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Q Did you keep this oath ?

A I kept this oath very long, however, I did talk to other people concerning this later on.

Q With whom did you talk.

A They were Jews, that is members or representatives of the American Joint Committee, with whom I had been in connection since 1942 in Grossburg.

Q Was not Gruppenfuehrer Mueller informed of this?

A I am certain that Mueller also knew of it, because Eichmann discussed all duties and accomplishments of his committee with Mueller.

Q You made a diagram with various names as a basis for your statements before the court in January of 1946. Did all of the

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persons named on the chart know of this special mission?

A I cannot say for certain whether all of them knew concerning this order, however, if you show me this diagram, I can tell you with whom I talked concerning this measure.

(DR. PELKMAN HANDS THE WITNESS THE DIAGRAM.)

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Q. Did you know at that time that the Jews were being exterminated ?

A. No, that was a short time before Eichmann informed me of this order.

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A. In the conferences with the Slocakian Government, Eichmann asked for five hundred marks for every Jew that was deported to Poland as a settlement fee, so as to give the Polish Government the impression that these Jews were actually being settled in Poland.

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Q What persons within the camp knew what was to happen to these Jews and what people in the camp actually did the killing or the liquidation?

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A I can only say what Eichmann told me.

LT. HARRIS: I object on the grounds that the witness can only testify to hear-say at the best and we already have competent witnesses who can say and who did have knowledge of what happened to these men at Auschwitz. For instance, the commandant at Auschwitz, therefore, I don't think that this witness is competent.

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(The commission recessed at 1700 hours.)

The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of DIETER WISLICENY taken on 5 June 1946.

Alice Meehan
Reporter

CERTIFIED

Joseph F. Tubridy
Commissioner